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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001458

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SUBJECT: RUBERWA AS STATESMAN: AUDITIONING FOR HIS NEXT
ROLE

Classified By: PolCouns DBrown, reasons 1.4 b,d.

¶1. (C) Summary. Congolese Vice President and disappointed presidential candidate Azarias Ruberwa has positioned himself as a mediator and statesmen in the run-up to the second round of elections. His primary message now consists of three main points: reconciliation between Kabila and Bemba, active engagement by the international community, and a new government led by men of integrity. While Ruberwa still is pursuing his charges of first-round election fraud, his emphasis has changed, a positive shift and perhaps an inevitable one, given his party's meager first-round tally. End summary.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador accompanied by PolCouns called on Ruberwa September 5 for our first meeting since the events of August 20-22. Ruberwa advisers Tshimpanga Matala and Nyamanga Baleja Saidi sat in. Ruberwa's opening comments summarizing current political developments reflected an apparent shift in emphasis. In the immediate aftermath of the July 30 elections, Ruberwa spoke of little else than his charges of massive election fraud. In the September 5 meeting, Ruberwa spoke in terms of his efforts to mediate between President Kabila and Vice President Bemba and his personal engagement to restart Transition government operations, including sessions of the Supreme Defense Council, the Espace Presidentiel (President plus Four Vice Presidents), and the Council of Ministers. Ruberwa also spoke of his estimates of how the second-round campaign will go, and the nature and composition of the post-election government.

¶3. (C) Ruberwa's basic message consists of three key objectives he is now working to promote:

- o A meeting by Kabila and Bemba to reinforce their commitment to the electoral process. (Note: Which finally took place September 13. End note.)
- o Clear statements by the international community and the United States on the August 20-22 disturbances.
- o Ensuring that the new government be led by honest individuals in key positions.

¶4. (C) Ruberwa emphasized bringing Kabila and Bemba together as an essential step in building confidence for the electoral process and civil peace. Ruberwa paid tribute to the efforts of Ambassadors of the International Committee to Accompany the Transition (CIAT), MONUC, and others toward this end, while also stressing his own efforts to promote further dialogue. Ruberwa cast himself in the role of peacemaker in current discussion with both camps, citing his success in

disengaging rival forces during the shooting, when his office had been in the line of fire of both. He did acknowledge his personal interest during the clashes, with residence and office located directly between GSSP positions at the Palais de la Nation and Bemba forces located with Bemba at his private residence. He confirmed that at least one of his guards had been wounded during the shooting, although the guard's wounds were not "serious". Ruberwa also spoke of the need for forthright statements from the international community regarding the August 20 - 22 events, and the need for both second-round presidential candidates to understand the need to avoid any further military action. In this regard, Ruberwa asserted that U.S. statements can have an even greater impact than those from European officials.

15. (SBU) Ruberwa stressed that whichever candidate emerged victorious, the new government should be free of corruption and led by good, honest, strong individuals in key positions. He mentioned no names, but this appeared to be an obvious reference to himself: he is clearly working to portray himself as a man of integrity.

16. (C) The Ambassador agreed with the gist of Ruberwa's comments, emphasizing that successful completion of the election process represents the only acceptable way forward for the DRC. The Ambassador also complemented Ruberwa on already convening a session of the Security Mixed Commission, a welcome start toward the resumption of government operations. The Ambassador and Ruberwa also had an exchange regarding composition and importance of the new National Assembly, noting the likely need for ongoing work to establish political alliance(s) and a working majority in that body.

KINSHASA 00001458 002 OF 002

17. (C) COMMENT: Ruberwa seems to have recovered from his apparent surprise and disappointment over poor July 30 results for himself and his party. While pursuing his party's formal first-round charges of fraud, it appears clear that this is no longer Ruberwa's focus, and his emphasis on future developments, completion of the Transition, and a post-election government represents a positive future-oriented agenda. His analysis of the August 20 - 22 fighting as a localized conflict resulting from a personal clash between the Kabila and Bemba camps, was pretty close to ours and that of most observers. Assuming Ruberwa continues to seek to stress his credentials as a statesman largely free of the taint of corruption (at least relative to most of the DRC political class), he will most certainly serve a positive role in the remaining months of the Transition government, and position himself for a future role as favorably as possible given his party's poor election showing. End comment.
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